USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form Zachariah School Greene County, North Carolina

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NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90) OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property			·	
historic name Zachariah School other names/site number N/A				
2. Location		-		······································
street & number West side SR 1239 0.6 mile sou city or town Wooten's Crossroads state North Carolina code NC county Green				eation N/A cinity X
3. State/Federal Agency Certification				
As the designated authority under the National H that this X nomination request for determined properties in the National Register of requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my National Register Criteria. I recommend that this X locally. See continuation sheet for ad Signature of Criteria Signature Signature Of Criteria Signature Signature Of Criteria Signature Of Criteria Signature Of Criteria Signature Of Criteria Signature Sig	ermination of el Historic Places opinion, the pr property be co ditional commo	ligibility meets the part of t	ne documentation rocedural and seets does	on standards for professional not meet the
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resource	es			·
State or Federal agency and bureau				
In my opinion, the property meets does sheet for additional comments.)	es not meet the	National Registe	er criteria. (_ See continuation
Signature of commenting or other official		Date	*	
State or Federal agency and bureau		-		

4. National Park Service	Certification		
See continua	onal Register ation sheet. for the National Register	-	
removed from the N	National Register		
other (explain):	<u> </u>		
Signature of Keeper	Date	of Action	
5. Classification			
X private public-lo public-St public-Fe Category of Property (Che X building(district site structure object Number of Resources with Contributing No 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0	ate oderal ock only one box) s) nin Property ncontributing buildings sites structures objects Total sources previously listed in the		· .
6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter of	categories from instructions)		
Cat: Education	-	Sub: school	
Present Functions Cat: Religion		Sub: social ha	11

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Rosenwald School

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

Brick

roof

Metal

walls

Wood

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
 - B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
 - D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- X A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
 - B removed from its original location.
 - C a birthplace or a grave.
 - D a cemetery.
 - E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
 - F a commemorative property.
 - G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1920-1956

Significant Dates

1920, 1921

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS) preliminary determination of indiv previously listed in the National Re previously determined eligible by t designated a National Historic Lan recorded by Historic American Burrecorded by Historic American Eng	idual lis egister he Nati dmark ildings	sting (36 onal Reg Survey	CFR 67 gister #	
Primary Location of Additional Data X State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other				
10. Geographical Data				
Acreage of Property approx. 1 acre UTM References Zone: 18	Easti	ng: 2553	340	Northing: 3934370
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe Boundary Justification (Explain why the			_	-
11. Form Prepared By				
name/title Nancy Van Dolsen street & number 1601 Highland Drive city or town Wilson	state	NC	date teleph zip co	October 5, 2004 none 252.243.7861 ode 27893
Property Owner				

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Zachariah School, Greene County, N.C.

Narrative Description

The Zachariah School stands adjacent to the frame Zachariah African Methodist Episcopal Church, a little more than one-half mile south of Wooten's Crossroads in north central Greene County, North Carolina. The building is set back approximately 100 feet from the road, facing east, with second-growth timber to the west and south. Less than one-quarter mile south of the school stands the Greene County Fire Tower.

A one-story, light timber frame building covered with weatherboards, the school contains three classrooms. The gable roof has exposed rafter ends and is covered with metal. Brick piers support the building and one brick interior chimney pierces the roof. Square, louvered gable vents are located on the north and south elevations. The east elevation (facade) has a door for each of the three classrooms. A long, shed roof porch covers the central two-thirds of the façade, and has replacement posts and a handicap-accessible ramp. There are no windows on the north and south elevations. Across the rear elevation (west) are three ranges of five large windows each with six-over-six double-hung sash, one for each classroom. The northern range is intact; the central range has the three center windows infilled with weatherboards and the southerly range has the two end windows infilled with plywood. The south exterior wall is sheathed in a narrower weatherboard than the other three; the 1921 auditorium wing had been constructed on this wall and was removed ca. 1967-1969. A ca. 1949 documentary photograph shows this addition intact.

The three classrooms each featured manufactured beaded-board wainscot below horizontal board sheathing. A movable partition was located between the north and central classrooms; a brick chimney was also shared by each classroom. The moveable wall was dismantled during the 1970s and the materials used to construct a counter now standing in the northern classroom. The original wood floors are intact in all three classrooms, although the northern and central rooms feature vinyl and carpet over the original. There is no access between the central and southern classroom; to enter the southern classroom one must use the door sheltered by the porch.

The southern classroom retains its slate backboard on the interior wall. Although two windows in the bank of windows on the west wall have been covered with plywood, the original surround remains intact. A door on the south wall led to the wing that was removed; a brick chimney stands on this wall (the top of the stack has been removed). The original paint is intact: a light gray ceiling, light blue walls, and a dark gray wainscot.

Although the south wall of the building has partially separated from the façade, this does not affect the integrity of the school, which is structurally sound.

¹ Geraldine Shepherd, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, October 22, 2003; Douglas Hall, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, October 22, 2003.

² Current location of this photograph unknown.

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Zachariah School, Greene County, N.C.

Summary

The Zachariah School meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A under two areas of significance--education and ethnic heritage/black--and meets Criterion C for architecture. Built in 1920-1921 with funds from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, contributions from the local African American community, and support from the Greene County School Board, the Zachariah School was one of five schools constructed in Greene County with help from the Rosenwald Foundation. These schools were built in Greene County between 1918 and 1925. From 1920 through 1956, Zachariah School served as an educational and social center for the African American community, hosting plays, glee club performances, adult education classes, home demonstrations, and meetings between the county extension agent and farmers. Although a slightly later wing to the building has been removed (also built with Rosenwald Funds), the present building follows a simplified plan similar to those suggested by the Rosenwald Fund. The school also meets Criterion Consideration A for religious association since it is eligible for its use as a school, for its role in the area of ethnic heritage, and for architecture. Although the closing date for its period of significance—1956—is less than fifty years ago, it is close enough to the fifty-year mark and it acknowledges the school's continuing education association.

Historical Narrative, Education and Ethnic Heritage/Black Context

At the opening of the twentieth century, the educational system for African Americans in North Carolina, and throughout the south, was rudimentary at best. The public school system had officially segregated the races in 1875, declaring that there should be separate but equal educational facilities for white and black children. Not until 1910, however, did public elementary schools for blacks begin receiving state funds. In 1913, further recognizing the need to improve schools for black students, North Carolina established the office of supervisor of rural elementary schools to promote the education of African American children. In 1921, a separate agency, the Division of Negro Education, was created to further advance public education for black students. A survey in the early 1930s conducted by the Division of Negro Education found that some black classrooms had sixty to one-hundred students, that only half of the schools stayed in session for the full school year, and that only seven percent of black students attended high school.²

Simultaneously, as North Carolina was working toward bettering education for its African American children, Julius Rosenwald, a Chicago philanthropist, started a fund for building new and modern school facilities for black students. Rosenwald (1862-1932), who made a fortune through his part ownership of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, became interested in aiding the African American community after reading two books, a biography of William H. Baldwin, a

¹ Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, Flora H. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992) 154, 155.
² Crow, 135.

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northern white man who devoted his life to promoting black education in the South, and *Up From Slavery*, the story of Booker T. Washington's life. In early 1911 he met with Booker T. Washington in Chicago, and later that year, toured Washington's Tuskegee Institute, which impressed him greatly. In 1912, he was made a trustee of Tuskegee.³

Rosenwald created his fund in southern education in 1917 with four funding priorities: the building of schoolhouses for rural African American children, the establishment of libraries, the education of teachers, and the development of centers for higher education for the black population. When Rosenwald established his fund, in the entire South there was not a single standard eight-grade rural black public school and no black public high school approved for even two-years of high school work. Where there were African American schools, they were open an average of four months a year, and the teacher usually had only attended school through eighth grade. That same year (1917) in Greene County, North Carolina, where slightly more than half of the population was African American, the value of African American schools in the county was only \$8,567 while the white schools were assessed at \$36,597.

For a community to qualify for support to build a school they needed to meet certain criteria. According to a publication printed by the Rosenwald Fund,

A school had to represent common effort by the state and county authorities and the local colored and white citizens. The state and county had to contribute to the building and agree to maintain it as a regular part of the public-school system. White citizens had to take an interest and contribute part of the money, since it was felt that white leadership was essential to the success of such a program in the South.... And the Negroes themselves had to show their desire for education by making gifts of money or labor, usually both.⁷

The buildings were to be constructed according to simple plans that were provided by the fund. The curriculum was to include formal and theoretical education and, as according to the principles of Booker T. Washington, students were also taught practical skills.⁸

³ Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949) 5, 25-26.

⁴ Embree and Waxman, 37.

⁵ Embree and Waxman, 38.

⁶ Greene County Board of Education, Insert in Minute Book, "Value of Rural School Properties at the end of June 1917." The white population in Greene County in 1920 was 8,026; the black population was 8,186 (University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center. United States Historical Census Data Browser. ONLINE. University of Virginia. http://fisher.lib.Virginia.edu/census/. 16 April 2004).

⁷ Embree and Waxman, 39.

⁸ Embree and Waxman, 40.

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The plans provided by the fund featured the most up-to-date pedagogical thought regarding the best spaces to help children to learn. Since the majority of schools were in rural areas with no electricity, maximizing natural light was a major concern. For this reason, the Rosenwald plans all featured groupings of tall, double-hung sash, classroom windows along the east and west walls. A southern exposure would be too warm during the late spring, summer, or early fall months; and northern light in the winter would not provide enough light. The plans also specified that each window should have two tan shades, to better regulate the amount and intensity of light. Windows were always to the children's left, so that a shadow would not be created as they wrote (except for left-handers). The interiors were to be painted either a cream ceiling with buff walls and walnut-stained wainscot or ivory cream ceiling with light gray walls and a walnut-stained wainscot. Interior corridors were to be minimized so that usable space was maximized.⁹

Each Rosenwald school also included an "industrial room," smaller than the standard-size classroom, for girls to be taught home economics and boys farm work and how to use simple tools. In addition, the school was to be used as much as possible by the public, and to that end, an auditorium that could seat the entire community should be built as part of the school. If there were not sufficient funds for an auditorium, a moving partition should be erected between two classrooms to create enough space for a large public meeting.¹⁰

Alabama was the first state to take advantage of the fund's support, and Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia soon followed. When the Fund closed its building program in 1932, North Carolina had received the greatest support and had constructed 813 buildings for 114,210 students at a cost of \$5,167,042. The fund had decided to end its building program not because it felt that its work was finished but they "felt that this particular demonstration had served its purpose of stimulating interest and must be discontinued in order that the southern states should not rely too heavily on outside aid and thus be delayed in assuming full responsibility for the schools...as an integral part of public provisions for the education of all people." 12

In 1882, ownership of an acre of land, just south of the small community known as Wootens Crossroads, was transferred to the School Board of Greene County. A small school for African Americans was constructed there. Two years later, in 1884, the Zachariah African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded and a frame rural church constructed approximately sixty feet north of the school building. This church still stands, and is outside the nomination boundary.

⁹ Thomas H. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* Vol. LXV, No. 4, October 1988: 401.

¹⁰ Hanchett, 401-405.

¹¹ Embree and Waxman, 51. In addition to schools, these buildings included teacherages, training schools for teachers, and shops; Hanchett, 444.

¹² Embree and Waxman, 57.

¹³ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, March 3, 1952.

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In July 1919, the Superintendent of Greene County Schools submitted plans for two new school buildings for grades one through eight for African American children to the Board of Education, one for Zachariah School (located in District 1, Carrs Township) and one for a school in Shine township. One month later, on August 16, 1919, the superintendent submitted revised plans, the "amendments [were] made to conform to certain requirements of the Rosenwald Committee for the distribution of the Rosenwald Fund." At that same meeting, the Board reviewed a bid from Mr. J. Ramshaw, a contractor from Raleigh, to build the two schools for \$1,000 a piece; the Board rejected the bid and "ordered that the construction of said buildings be held up until a reasonable bid be secured." ¹⁶

More than a year later, the Board approved plans for an addition to the Zachariah School, "in view of the fact that the Rosenwald Fund was furnishing \$1,000 for this addition." The local community greatly favored the addition, with Jesse Williams appearing before the board "in the interest of the building" and "a delegation of ladies appeared . . . requesting that additional room be added to the school building which is in the process of erection." The original building, which still stands, was a three-room school; the "additional room" was an auditorium. In January 1921, the Board authorized payment of \$15.00 to Jesse Williams for "building toilets at the Zachariah colored school."

The budget for the 1921-1922 school year, the first year that the new Zachariah School was used, proposed paying the white teachers a yearly salary of \$80, the black teachers only \$50. Also, despite the fact that there was approximately the same number of white and black children of school age in the county, there were seventy white teachers and only forty black.²⁰

During the 1930s, the local committeemen for Zachariah School were Jesse Williams (who had lobbied for the addition and constructed the toilets), Matthew Anderson, and Johnnie Moye. Most of the students at Zachariah School came from farm families, including farm owners, tenant farmers, and sharecroppers, and almost all students walked to the school. The school day was from 8:30 A.M. until 3:00 P.M., with an hour for lunch. Everyone brought their lunch, which was eaten in the classrooms or the auditorium. The school, and the neighboring church,

¹⁴ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, July 17, 1919. The school in Shine Township was most likely Knox School, a one-teacher school.

¹⁵ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, August 16, 1919.

¹⁶ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, August 16, 1919.

¹⁷ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, October 4, 1920.

¹⁸ Geraldine Shepherd, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, October 22, 2003. Ms. Shepherd attended Zachariah School from 1948 until 1956.

¹⁹ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, January 3, 1921.

²⁰ Greene County Board of Education, Insert in Minute Book, "Proposed Budget 1921-1922."

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served as a community center, and families attended plays, concerts, and meetings at the school. Students played basketball against other schools in front of the building.²¹

In the late 1940s, the Greene County Board of Education began to investigate consolidating all of the rural black schools into three large schools, each with fifteen classrooms and auditorium. On May 24, 1949, a petition was sent to the Board from N.H. Edwards, James T Barnes, Haywood Williams, James Edwards, and Theo. Dunn, a committee "representing the Negro citizens of Greene County," requesting that the consolidated schools be built as soon as possible. The petition stated that the existing rural schools were

inadequate to meet present-day needs of our boys and girls... Existing conditions such as following: 1. poor school building 2. poor furniture and equipment 3. poor locations 4. not sufficient playgrounds 5. too many grades per teacher, are hindering the development of the teachers and pupils mentally, physically, socially, and morally.²²

The Board at their July 9, 1949 meeting requested that Mr. William Coleman, architect of Kinston, N.C., draw up specifications and blueprints for a consolidated African American school.²³

Despite the support of the community and the recognition that new rural schools needed to be constructed for African American students, no further consideration of the matter was given until 1954 when a report on the "Status of Negro Schools in Greene County" was presented on March 30, 1954. In this report, prepared by African American leaders in the county (Mrs. Dora Farmer, Mr. Walter Aytch, and Mr. James P. Suggs), consolidation was again proposed as a solution. The report noted that the thirteen elementary schools had forty-two teachers and 1,455 pupils in schools that have "inadequate water supply, sewer disposal, physical sites, library facilities, luncheon facilities, and classroom furnishings." The Zachariah School during the late 1940s through the early 1950s had four teachers in the modest building (Raymond A. Morris, Mrs. Tallie W. Felton, Mrs. Mary W. Foreman, Mrs. Daisy K. Morris) teaching approximately 140 to 150 pupils. The teacher-student ratio was approximately 35-37 students for every teacher.

By 1954-1955, the Board of Education agreed that they needed to construct at least one of the consolidated schools, and selected North Greene Elementary School as the first to be built at a cost of \$183,000.²⁵ The decision to construct a new building may have been made due to the

²¹ Geraldine Shepherd, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, October 22, 2003; Donald Hall, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen, October 22, 2003.

²² Greene County Board of Education, Insert in Minute Book, 1949.

²³ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, July 9. 1949.

²⁴ Reports to the Greene County Board of Education, 1947-1956. Mrs. Tallie Felton took a leave of absence to attend college in 1954-1956; Elaine Welch took her place during those years.
²⁵ Greene County Board of Education, Insert to Minute Book, 1954.

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May 17, 1954 Supreme Court decision in the Brown v. Board of Education case, which declared that separate educational facilities for each race were inherently unequal.

On August 1, 1955, the Greene County Board of Education passed a resolution that "No child shall be assigned to any school in Greene County on the basis of race or color." This resolution also stated that the Board would still assign students to schools but that parents could petition for a transfer. At the September 6, 1955 Board meeting, ten transfers were requested; all but one was approved.

Zachariah School closed in 1956, and its students were assigned to North Greene Elementary School. Two of the teachers from Zachariah School, Elaine Welch and Mary Foreman, also transferred to North Greene.²⁷

After its closing in 1956, the school was purchased by a neighboring white farm family, the Carrs, who used it for storage. The wing was removed between 1967 and 1969. The Carr family gave the school to Zachariah A.M.E. Church for their use in the 1970s. The church renovated the building for use as a fellowship hall.²⁸

Architecture Context

As a building constructed in 1920-1921, the plan of the Zachariah School is not found in the Rosenwald Fund's 1924 publication, *Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3*, but it does follow some of its suggestions, including multi-pane sash windows arranged in groups, a movable partition between classrooms so a large open area that served as the auditorium and cafeteria could be made, and the lack of corridors so that useable space could be maximized. The original section of the school, which still stands, was a three-room building, with a movable partition between two of the rooms. The rooms feature manufactured beaded-board wainscoting, with horizontal boards covering the walls above. The movable partition was removed and used to construct a serving counter at the north end of the building but the opening between the two rooms remains unchanged. Unlike most Rosenwald Schools, the Zachariah School has no cloakrooms; this may be due to Greene County's Board of Education providing their own plans for the building. The gable-front wing that was built entirely with Rosenwald Funds was constructed onto the south end of the building and had a stage; this was removed between 1967 and 1969.²⁹

²⁶ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, Aug. 1, 1959. This resolution most likely was not considered until 1955, until after the appeal to the Supreme Court regarding Brown v. Board of Education was upheld on May 31, 1955, and school districts accepted that segregation would no longer be considered legal.

²⁷ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, June 4, 1956.

²⁸ Douglas Hall, Interview with Nancy Van Dolsen.

²⁹ Geraldine Shepherd, Donald Hall. Interviews with Nancy Van Dolsen.

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The Zachariah School was one of five schools constructed using Rosenwald funds in Greene County, and the only elementary school that still stands.³⁰ The only other Rosenwald-funded school in the county is the Greene County Training School in Snow Hill (NR 2003). The Greene County Training School was a large brick building that housed grades one through eleven, and was the first high school constructed for African American students in the county. Only four of Greene County's thirteen rural elementary African American schools were Rosenwald funded, a low number compared to other North Carolina counties with a large African American population. For example, Halifax County had forty-six Rosenwald-funded schools, Warren County had twenty-five, and Wake County had twenty-one.

Zachariah School is the sole remaining Rosenwald-funded elementary school in Greene County and a good example of a multiple-teacher school constructed with help from the Rosenwald Foundation. The original portion of the school still stands and retains almost all of its original exterior finishes (with the exception of the porch posts and floor) and much of its interior finishes. It is similar to St. Matthews School in Wake County (NR 2001), a two-teacher frame building, funded with help from the Rosenwald Foundation in 1922 in its finishes and movable partition wall, but the St. Matthews School was constructed with cloak rooms, as were most Rosenwald-funded schools. The Panther Branch School in Wake County (NR 2001) is a three-teacher frame school built in 1926 with assistance from the Rosenwald Foundation. A more expansive building than the Zachariah School, the Panther Branch School had two cloak rooms and an industrial classroom in addition to the three standard classrooms.

³⁰ During the years that Zachariah School was open, elementary schools were comprised of first through eight grades.

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Zachariah School, Greene County, N.C.

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Zachariah School, Greene County, NC

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses the school and its associated one-acre lot, the present tax parcel, 0200626.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the school and its historically associated property, providing an appropriate setting for the resource.

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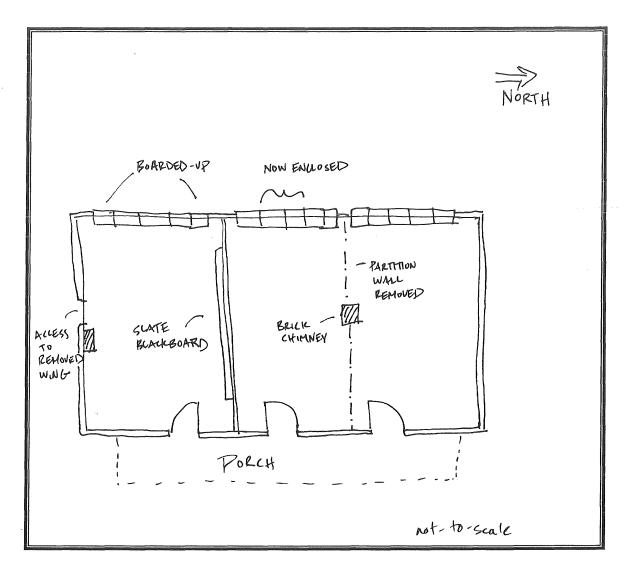
Section Number Photos Page 1

Zachariah School Greene County, North Carolina

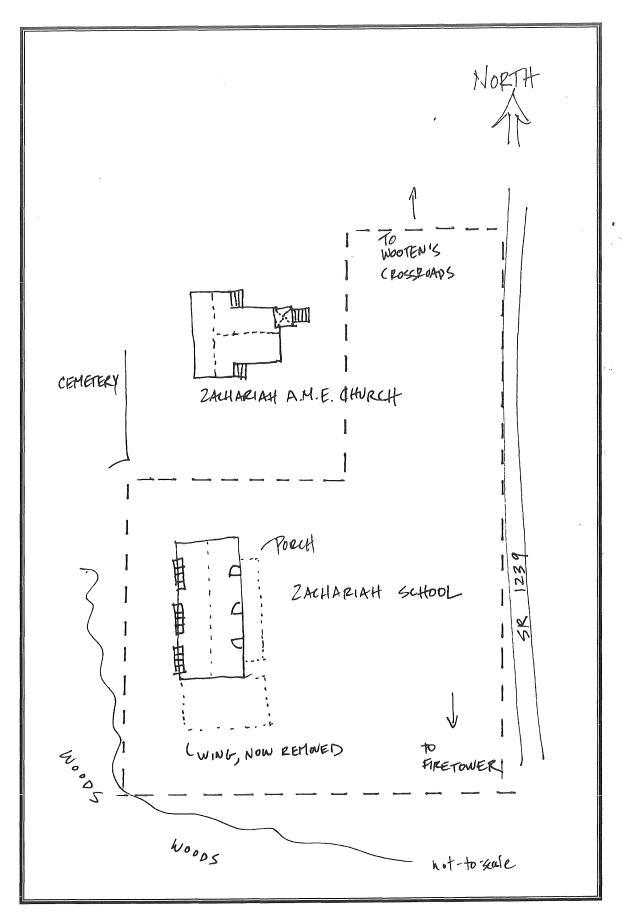
PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs:

- 1) Zachariah School
- 2) Greene County, North Carolina
- 3) Nancy Van Dolsen
- 4) April 2004
- 5) State Historic Preservation Office
- 6-7)
- 1: Façade, looking west
- 2: South and west elevations, looking northeast
- 3: Façade and west elevations, looking northwest
- 4: Interior, central and north room, looking north northwest
- 5: Interior, south room, looking west
- 6: Interior, south room, looking north

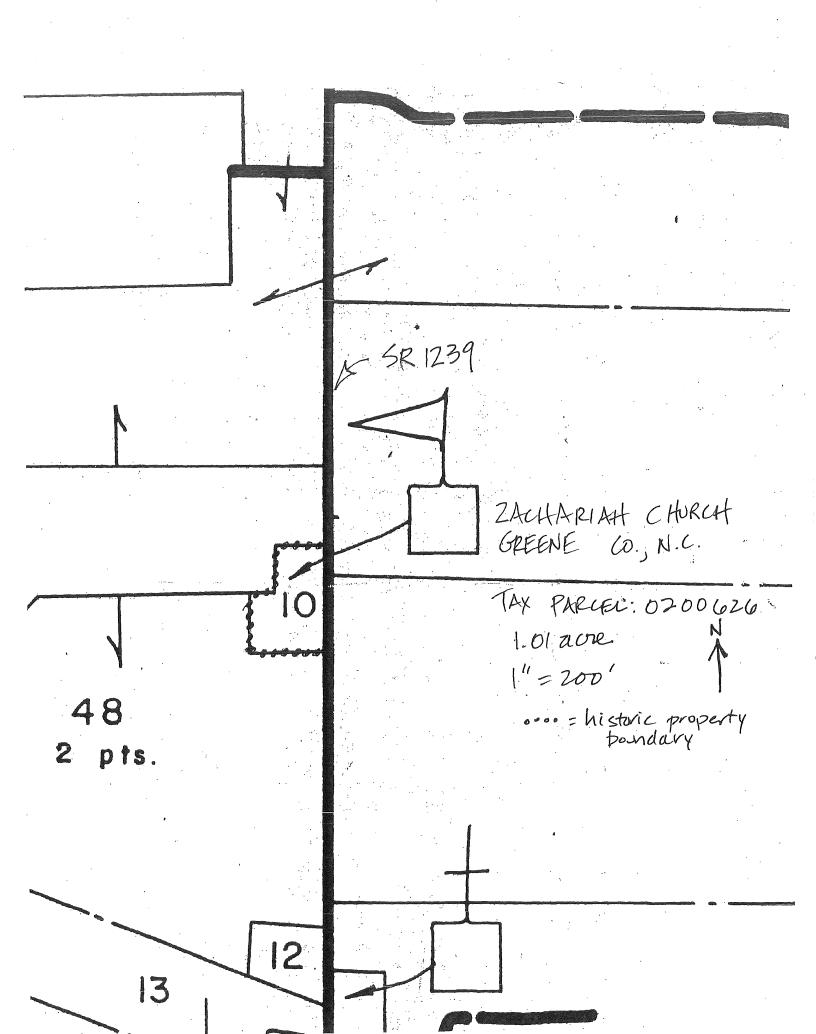


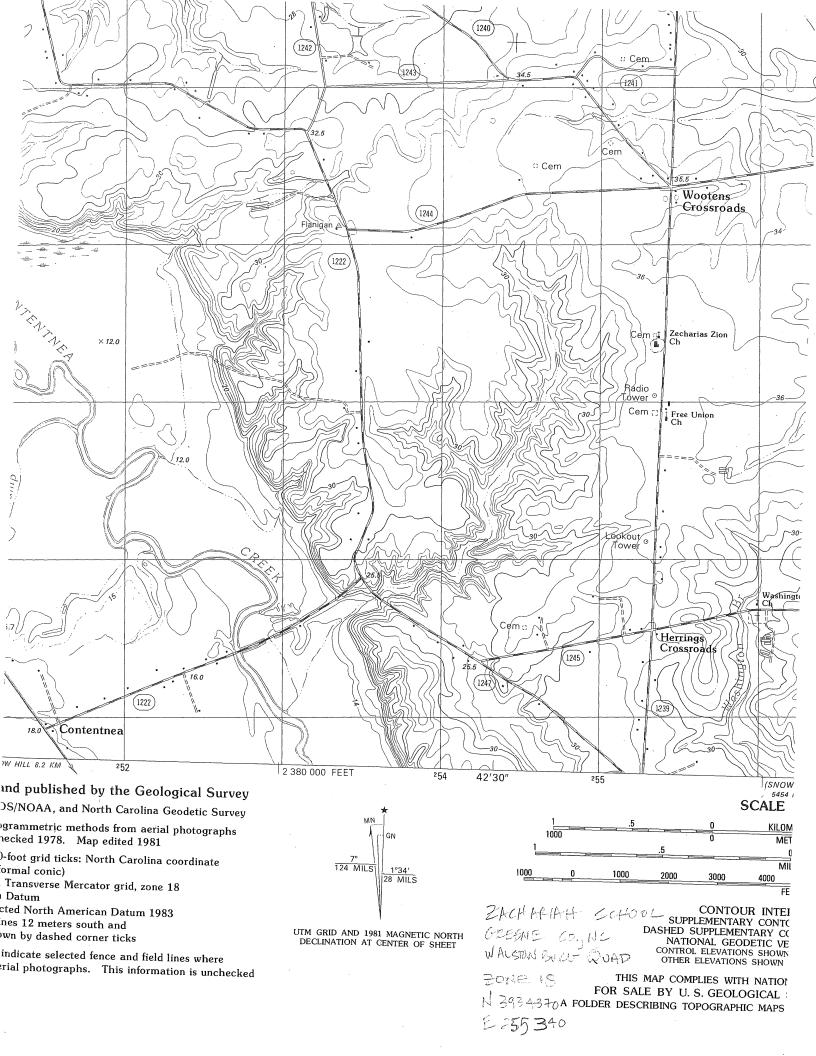
Floor Plan, Zachariah School, Greene County, N.C.

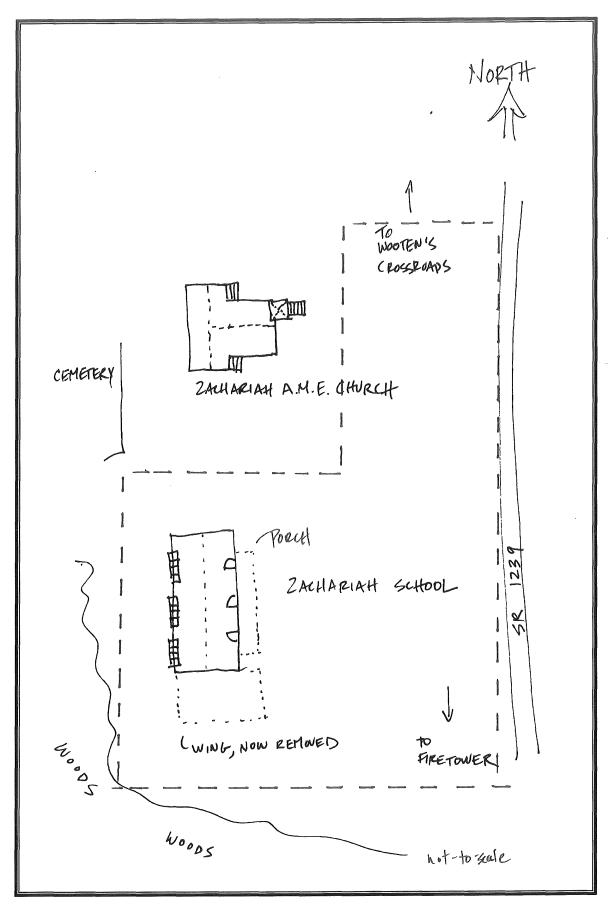


Site Map, Zachariah School, Greene County, N.C.

--- Approximate Boundary

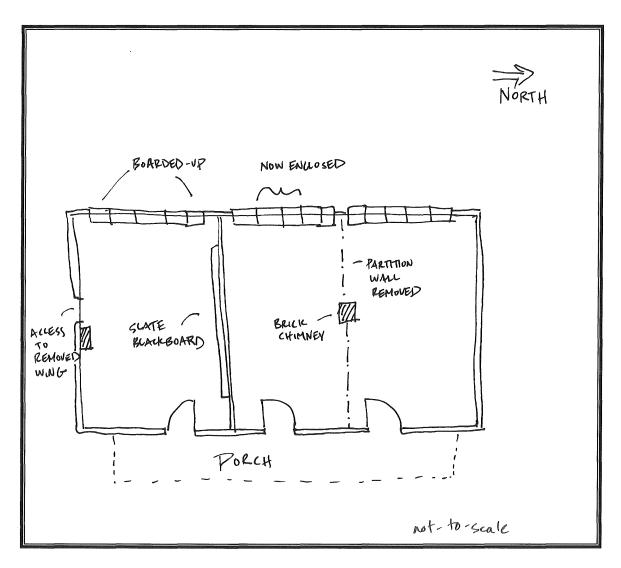






Site Map, Zachariah School, Greene County, N.C.

--- Approximate Boundary



Floor Plan, Zachariah School, Greene County, N.C.

